POPULATION ISSUES

Briefing Kit 1992

UNFPA
United Nations
Population Fund

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FOREWORD

This is the third edition of the **Population Issues Briefing Kit.** The kit examines ten key issues in the field of population and development. We hope that you will find it both useful and informative.

Today we understand better than ever before the linkages between population, poverty, environmental damage, rapid urbanization, and the depletion of natural resources. These issues demand prompt and urgent action, not by one country or group of countries, but by all countries acting together. The future of humanity depends on it.

Nafis Sadik
Executive Director

July 1992

Population Growth: The Changing Landscape

World population, which will reach 5.48 billion in mid-1992 and 6 billion by 1998, is growing faster than ever before: three people every second, more than 250,000 every day. At the beginning of the decade the annual addition was 93 million; by the end it will approach 100 million. At this rate the world will have almost a billion more people (roughly the population of China) by the year 2001. Approximately ninety-five per cent of this population growth is occurring in the developing countries.

Average family size in developing countries has decreased: from 6.1 children per woman in the early 1960s to 3.9 today. Population growth rates in developing countries have also declined: from more than 2.5 per cent a year in the early 1960s to just over 2.0 per cent today. However, the absolute numbers being added continue to increase.

These increases will move forward like a wave into the next century; more than half the developing world's population in the year 2000 will be under 25.

The United Nations long-term projections of world population released in early 1992 have been revised upward. The "medium variant" or most likely projection for 2100 is now 11.2 billion. This is 1.0 billion or 10 per cent larger than that predicted in the 1982 long-range projection.

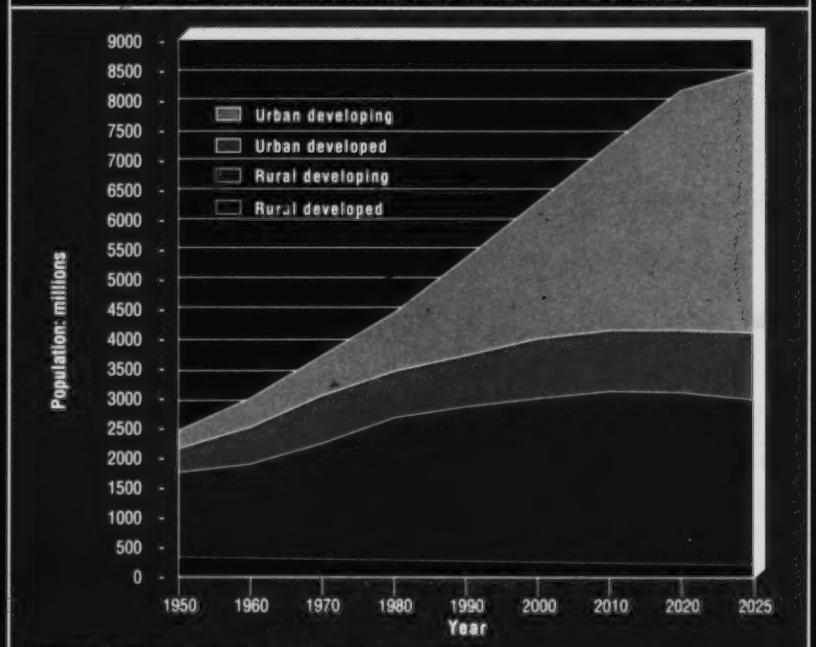
The time it takes to add a billion people has become shorter and shorter. It took a century (1830-1930) to go from 1 billion to 2 billion people, 30 years (1930-1960) for the third billion, 15 years (1960-1975) for the fourth, and 12 years to grow from 4 billion to 5 billion. Adding the next billion will take only about 10 years.

Growth is not expected to stop altogether till the year 2200, when world population may stabilize at approximately 11.6 billion — over twice its present level. But if fertility declines more slowly, following the less optimistic "high variant" projection, the world might reach that level before the middle of the next century.

A Changing Balance

The population of developing countries has more than doubled in 35 years, increasing from 1.7 billion in 1950 to 4.1 billion in 1990. By

The urbanization of the world 1950-2025



Urban and rural populations, 1950-2025, medium projection

Source: United Nations Population Division

2000, it will grow to nearly 5 billion — out of an expected world total of 6.26 billion.

By contrast, the developed countries (Europe, including the former Soviet Union, North America and Japan) have increased from 832 million in 1950 to 1.2 billion in 1990 — with 1.26 billion expected in the year 2000. By 2020-2025, the industrialized countries will account for only 3 per cent of the annual population increase and will comprise less than a fifth of the world's population.

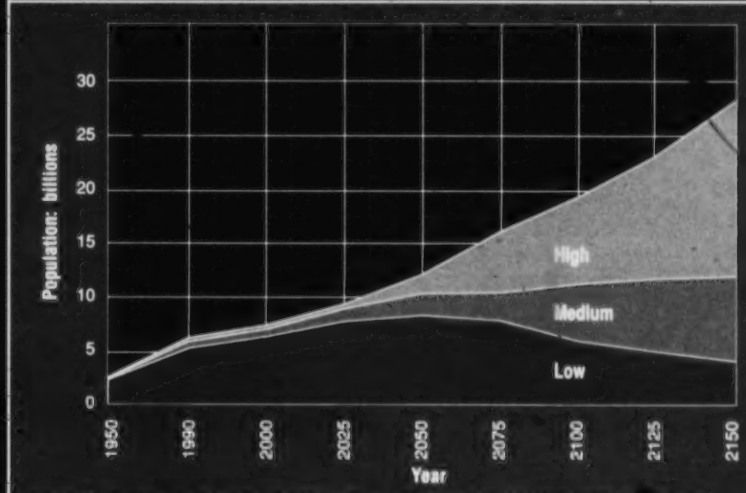
Continued rapid growth in developing countries has brought human numbers into collision with the resources required to sustain them and is among the many human-made threats to the global environment. Increasing numbers add to demands on land, air and water resources, making it more difficult to support growing numbers of people.

Increasing numbers and declining resources have contributed to increasing migration from rural to urban areas. By the year 2000 over 40 per cent of Africa and Asia (excluding Japan) and 76 per cent of Latin America will be urbanized.

Throughout the developing world these trends have spurred population policies aimed at balancing rural and urban populations and slowing rapid population growth. Increasingly, they are linked to economic and social development programmes, a linkage critical for the success of both.

The world will have almost a billion more people by the year 2001.

Alternative futures: population projections to 2150



United Nations, low, medium and high population projections. By 2050 there is a difference of 4 billion between high and low projections — about the size of world population in 1975.

Source: United Nations Population Division

Developing Countries: In Search of Balance

As much as ninety-seven per cent of global population growth is projected to take place in Africa, Asia and Latin America between now and the year 2050 — Africa's population will increase almost 4 times and India's will double — the countries least able to absorb growing numbers of people.

Africa's population is growing at 3.0 per cent annually, the fastest ever for an entire region. Eastern and western Africa are growing at 3.2 per cent. Next to Africa, western Asia (broadly the Arab states and Iran) with a 2.8 per cent growth rate, and southern Asia (the Indian sub-continent), with 2.3, have the highest rates in the world. Asia overall is growing at 1.9 per cent and Latin America at 2.1 per cent.

Europe has an average growth rate of 0.25 per cent a year. The former Soviet Union's growth rate is 0.8 per cent. North America's rate is also 0.8 per cent.

Asia, with a current population of 3.1 billion, is expected to have 4.9 billion by 2025; Africa with 642 million in 1990, is expected to grow to 1.59 billion; Latin America, with 448 million, will have 757 million; Europe, with 498 million, is expected to reach 515 million; the former Soviet Union, with 289 million, will increase to 352 million; and North America, with 276 million, will grow to 332 million.

Demographic trends by region:

Latin America: Over the past 40 years, the continent has made notable progress in increasing life expectancy, from 51 years for a child born in the 1950s to approximately 67 for children born today.

Latin America and the Caribbean have the largest portion of urban dwellers (72 per cent) in the world. If current trends continue, Mexico City will have 25.6 million inhabitants and Sao Paulo 22.1 million by the year 2000; they will be the largest cities in the world.

Countries with effective family planning programmes in the region include Colombia, which through its PROFAMILIA programme has lowered the population growth rate from 3 per cent in the 1960s to a rate approaching 1.9, and Mexico, which has lowered its growth rate from 3.2 in 1970 to 2.2 through family planning. These and other countries such as Costa Rica and Cuba have extensive mother and child health care programmes which include family planning services.

Asia and the Pacific: Besides having 59 per cent of the world's people, Asia presently has five of the world's ten most populous cities and will have far more in the year 2000. The continent led the way in family planning; by 1974, 17 countries had population policies and virtually all promoted family planning. Despite Asia's moderate growth rate, its numbers are still increasing rapidly because of the large population base; over 60 per cent of the world's population increase takes place there.

There is a growing division between the "low-growth" countries of east Asia and the "high-growth" countries of south Asia. China, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea and Thailand all have highly literate populations, effective family planning programmes and low population growth rates. On the other hand, rapid population growth in Pakistan, Bangladesh and the populous northern states of India is partly the result of women's low status, low general literacy and limited access to family planning. Sri Lanka is the exception, with high literacy and equal access to education for girls, and a highly effective family planning programme.

Arab States: Practically all the Arab States have high population growth rates, averaging 3 per cent, sufficient to double the population in a little over 20 years. High fertility stems from cultural and social factors, such as early marriage, widespread lack of contraception and the preference for large families. It is not uncommon to have six to eight children per family.

Sub-Saharan Africa: Before the mid- 1970s only three African States had population policies; many had not even carried out censuses. Large families were (and still are) the norm. In 1990, the

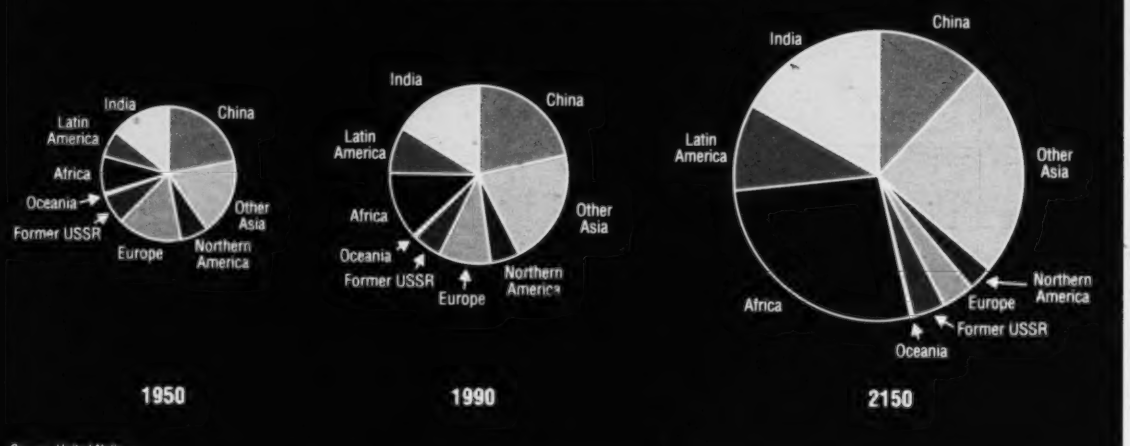
number of children in 40 sub-Saharan African countries averaged between 5.8 and 8.3 per woman. But women in most African countries want smaller families than their mothers, and family planning is expanding; forty-two governments now provide direct support for family planning services and an additional six provide indirect support. A few, like Mauritius and Zimbabwe, have already achieved high rates of contraceptive use and in others, such as Botswana, Ghana and Kenya, birth rates are turning downwards.

Europe: Fertility in Europe has declined since 1965 from somewhat above the replacement level of 2.1 births per woman to 1.7, a point well below replacement. Europe's numbers will decline from 498 million in 1990 to 486 million by 2050.

A similar pattern is found in **Japan**, which lowered its population growth rate from 1.43 per cent to 0.43 per cent and more than doubled the proportion of older people between 1950 and 1990. From 5 per cent in 1950, over-65s are now 12 per cent of the population. By 2025 the proportion of over-65s will be 24 per cent.

Continued rapid growth in developing countries has brought human numbers into collision with the resources to sustain them.

Distribution of World Population, Medium-Fertility Extension, 1950, 1990 and 2150



Source: United Nations

Population Programmes: Needs For The Year 2000

To keep population growth to the United Nations medium or "most likely" projection, programme funding will have to double by the end of the century, according to UNFPA research.

UNFPA's estimate is that current annual levels of $4.5 billion from all sources would have to reach $9 billion by the year 2000. Population assistance to developing countries would have to increase from the present total of $802 million a year to as much as $4.5 billion.

Developing countries, which now spend $3.5 billion, would have to contribute $4.5 billion.

UNFPA estimates that this amount is necessary to extend family planning services in developing countries to 567 million couples (59 per cent of women of reproductive age), compared with 381 million (51 per cent) today. To achieve this apparently modest increase will require extending modern family planning services to a total of 1.5 billion people; about 2 billion people will start to use family planning or move to safer methods during the decade.

Population assistance is only 1.18 per cent of the total official development assistance (ODA).

A handful of industrialized countries provide the bulk of population assistance, as they do for development aid overall. The U.S. continues to be the largest single donor, providing approximately $281 million in 1990. Japan is the next largest donor with commitments of about $64 million during this period. Other major donors include Norway, Germany, Canada, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. International population assistance from all sources, including the World Bank, amounted to approximately $971 million in 1990.

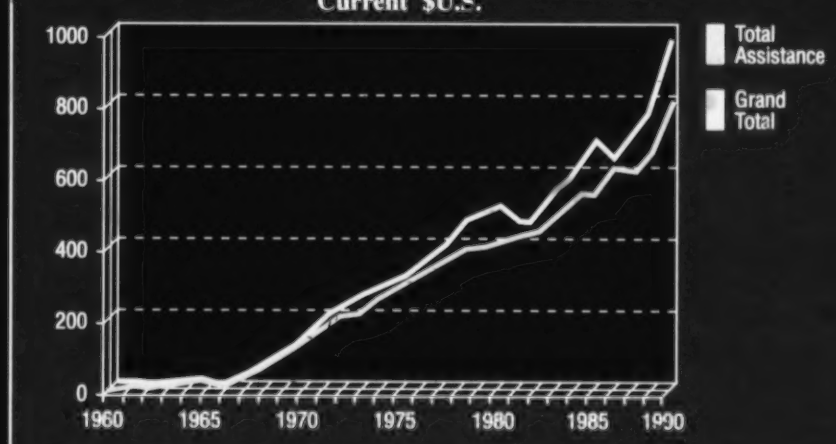
By ensuring that total official development assistance doubles between now and the year 2000, and that the proportion of ODA devoted to population increases from about some 1 per cent today to 4 per cent by the end of the decade, the population assistance target could be achieved.

The precedents for both these increases already exist. ODA doubled between 1978 and 1988, and Norway already contributes 4 to 5 per cent of development funds to population and family planning activities.

In addition, the World Bank and other lending institutions would be encouraged to increase contributions to $500 million by the year 2000. Budget allocations for population in fiscal year 1990 totalled $169.3 million.

Total Population Assistance, 1960-1990

(Millions of Current and Constant U.S. Dollars)



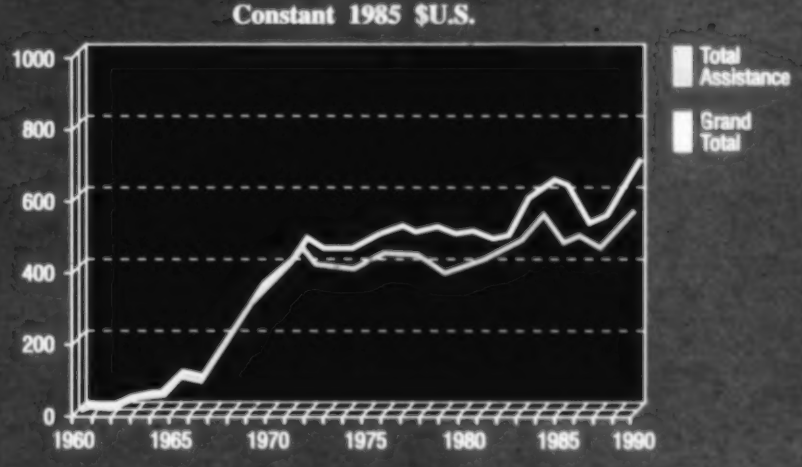
Total Assistance excludes World Bank; Grand Total includes World Bank.
Source: UNFPA

The resources of UNFPA will also have to increase substantially. During the past few years, expenditure has remained constant in real terms, although every major country except one, the United States, and over 100 countries overall, contribute to UNFPA.

The Fund hopes to increase revenues from all sources including multibilateral from $233 million in 1991 to $1 billion by the year 2000. There is no shortage of demand: UNFPA offices hold proposals for projects for several hundred million dollars which are waiting to be funded today.

In 1990, 141 countries received international population assistance totaling $602 million. Of this amount, Asia and the Pacific received 35 per cent or $208 million; sub-Saharan Africa 25 per cent or $153 million; Latin America 15 per cent or $92 million; the Middle East and North Africa 9 per cent or $52 million; Europe 1 per cent or $3.5 million and Interregional 15 per cent or $93 million.

UNFPA estimates that population programme funding will have to double by the end of the century.



Family Planning: A Human Right

Family planning is the conscious effort to determine the number and spacing of births. The right of individuals and couples "freely and responsibly to decide the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so" was first recognized as a human right in 1968, and over the past two decades has attained almost universal acceptance. It was endorsed by the World Population Conference held in Bucharest in 1974 and by the International Conference on Population held in Mexico City in 1984, which reaffirmed "the right to choice of family size without coercion, and the right to choice of method, which should include all medically-approved and appropriate methods of family planning."

Delegates at the 79-country International Forum on Population in the 21st Century held in Amsterdam in November 1989 called for stronger family planning and maternal and child health services in both the public and private sectors. Since the Amsterdam Declaration was adopted in 1989, support for greater emphasis on population activities has been given by UNFPA's Governing Council, ECOSOC and the General Assembly of the United Nations; by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; and by the World Summit for Children. The principles of the Amsterdam Declaration are also reflected in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

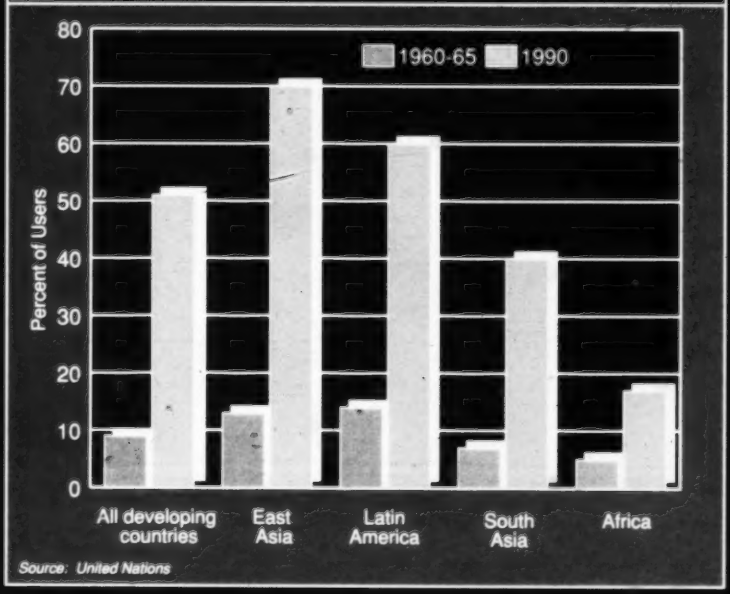
Family planning makes a positive contribution to the health of both mothers and children and to lower infant and maternal death rates. Conversely, improved maternal and infant health enhances and helps create the conditions for effective family planning programmes; thus family planning has its maximum impact on health when it is made available as an integral part of maternal and child health services.

Many millions of couples and individuals throughout the world, however, still do not have access to family planning, either because they lack information, or because an appropriate range of methods and follow-up services is not available.

The use of modern family planning techniques in developing countries has grown from less than 10 per cent of married couples in the 1960s to 45 per cent in 1983, and to 51 per cent today. However, it has been estimated that births would be fewer by about a quarter in Africa and about a third in Asia and Latin America if women were able to have only the number of children that they desired.

Women who lack family planning, or have encountered failure with it, may have only two options — an unplanned pregnancy or abortion. The rise in the number of women resorting to abortion testifies to the failure of family planning services to keep pace with the demand. The toll is great — complications from abortion alone kill an

Trends in Contraceptive Prevalence, by Region



Source: United Nations

estimated 200,000 women per year. The best way to prevent abortion is to make family planning accessible to all women and men.

The success of family planning programmes depends on decisions made by billions of individual women and men.

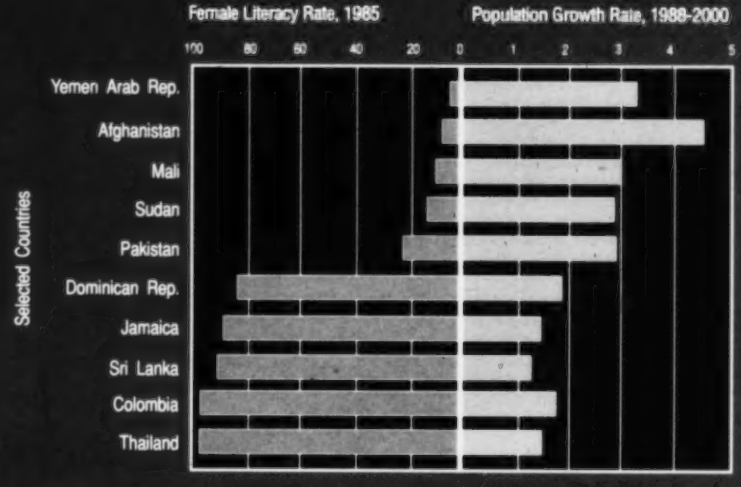
Countries which have adopted population policies, have information programmes to make entire populations aware of the benefits of family planning, and services to back them up, have registered significant reductions in fertility rates. This is particularly notable in countries with networks of community health workers and clinics, paying close attention to primary health care and preventive medicine as well as to family planning.

However, family planning is not just a matter of providing contraceptive services. The ability to take advantage of family planning is part of an attitude to life. It is created by an environment in which everyone has opportunities and choices, including access to family planning services.

The process of building these opportunities begins at birth. How parents greet the birth of a new child; whether a girl is as welcome as a boy; whether girls and boys are reared with equal chances of health and education; and whether the parents choose to plan the birth of a subsequent child affect the opportunities and aspirations of the whole family. These factors will have a bearing on how future generations perceive opportunities for choice in their own family life. As children grow to adulthood and parents become grandparents, a whole society's values change.

Millions of couples and individuals throughout the world still do not have access to family planning.

Women's Literacy and Population Growth



There is a close connection between education and fertility: the more education women have, the more likely they are to have small families.

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1990

Population Policy: Growing Support

A majority of developing countries now see population policy as a necessity to meet the challenge of high population growth, economic hardship and the deterioration of resources and the environment. Population policy varies from country to country and must always retain flexibility because the problems, and responses to them, depend on individual economic, social and cultural circumstances.

Population programmes have had a significant effect on the use of family planning, fertility levels and overall population increase.

Family planning is a major element in population policy, one of several components including demographic research and data collection; structure of the population; problems associated with youth and the elderly; distribution, migration and the explosion of megacities; the taking of censuses and the strengthening of information, education and communication activities.

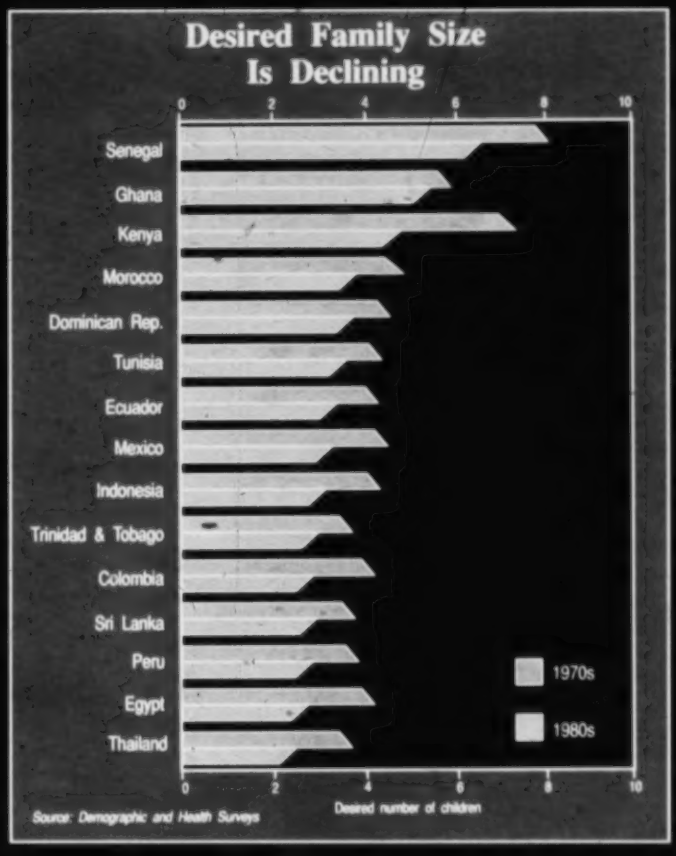
Strong family planning programmes have the strongest effect where social and economic development is the highest. According to Population Council studies, among countries with a high level of development, a change in official family planning programme effort from "very low" to "high" produces an estimated additional decline in total fertility of 2.3 births per woman. On the other hand, those countries classified as "least developed" showed no appreciable decline in fertility between 1950-55 and 1985-90.

Today, there are 129 countries which provide direct support for family planning, and 17 more which provide indirect support, and only 4 countries discourage family planning. (The former Soviet Union has been counted as one country.)

Population programmes require much longer than economic and social development projects to show results; for this reason they require additional attention in the policy-making process to ensure that they are given the necessary priority.

Population policies and programmes succeed or fail according to the degree of support they muster from the political leadership; from government officials; from business and commercial interests; from religious, intellectual and community leaders; and from the people at large. Where support lacks energy or conviction among these groups, population programmes cannot succeed.

Given favourable attitudes, the next — and essential — stage is implementation.



Population policy has the most impact in a country with a national population council and a population planning unit, preferably within the national planning ministry; over 3/4 of countries surveyed now have population units in these planning bodies.

The national population council establishes strategic goals such as population distribution and migration, fertility levels, maternal and infant mortality and life expectancy. The population planning unit oversees the implementation process, working with line ministries in education, health and social services, with central and local planning units, with donors and with national and local non-governmental organizations.

Over the past 20 years planners and officials have accepted the need to integrate population policy and development planning. Population programmes should be linked to the alleviation of poverty, improving health and education, pursuing environmental measures — and, specifically, to improving the condition of women. In all countries where women have benefitted from development, population programmes have made impressive strides.

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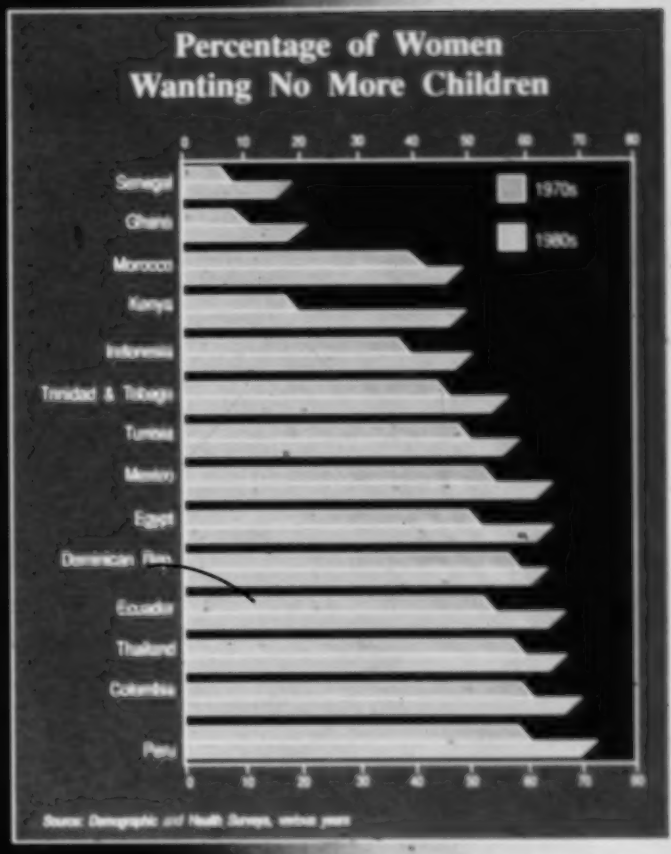


Valuing Women Equally: A Country's Best Investment

Women's right to self-determination is rapidly becoming recognized as one of the keys to development. Raising the status of women by improving their education, health, and living and working conditions is far more than a humanitarian consideration; it is essential for slower population growth and for economic and social progress. Women should be given high priority in development spending and international aid policies.

Yet in country after country, from the shanty towns of Nairobi to the mountains of Nepal, women are held back by poverty, ill health, malnutrition, inadequate education or illiteracy, second class status before the law, landlessness and crushing responsibilities for household and family.

It is generally accepted that if women are to have more control over their own lives, they should have the right to choose the size and spacing of their families. Reproductive freedom is "the freedom from which all other freedoms flow", according to the World Conference to Review and Appraise the United Nations Decade for Women held in Nairobi in 1985. An estimated half a million women die every year from complications caused by pregnancy or childbirth. The lives of countless others are shortened by pregnancies too early or too late in life, too often, or too close together.

Though many women would like smaller families than their parents' generation, only half of all women in the developing world have access to modern family planning. In Africa, 77 per cent of those who said they did not want any more children were not practising contraception; in Asia the figure was 57 per cent and in Latin America 43 per cent.

It is also recognized that more attention must be given to women's productive rather than reproductive role so that they may have status apart from motherhood. Few would argue that women should have to depend on children to provide yet another pair of hands for fuel and food gathering and for extra earning capacity.

The fate of women in developing countries is also marked by a high incidence of teenage pregnancy and early marriage. In a majority of countries, especially in Africa and in Latin America and the Caribbean, more than 10 per cent of the total fertility rate is contributed by women aged 15 to 19. Early pregnancy also contributes to a high incidence of school drop-outs. Teenage girls need family planning information and programmes. Raising the legal age of marriage will also help.

Customs and practices in many nations effectively deny women the right to own land, inherit property, establish credit, or rise in the professional or business world. About half the adult women in the developing world cannot read — and thus cannot participate fully in economic, social, community and family life.

Education and smaller families go together. Poorly educated women in Brazil, for instance, have an average of 6.5 children each, those with secondary education only 2.5. In Liberia, women who have been to secondary school are 10 times more likely to take advantage of family planning facilities than those who have not been to school at all.

Education is the touchstone for enhancing women's lives. An estimated 60 per cent of the global total of 105 million children excluded from school are girls. The Amsterdam Declaration, adopted by consensus by representatives of 79 countries at the 1989 International Forum on Population in the 21st Century, underscored the effects of education on demographic behaviour, and the importance of increasing female literacy and achieving universal enrolment of girls in primary school by the year 2000. The World Summit for Children, held in September 1990, also supported strengthening the role of women and ensuring their equal rights. Most recently, a joint statement of goals adopted by WHO, UNICEF, UNDP and

UNFPA in 1991 asserted that the most urgent priority in education is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women.

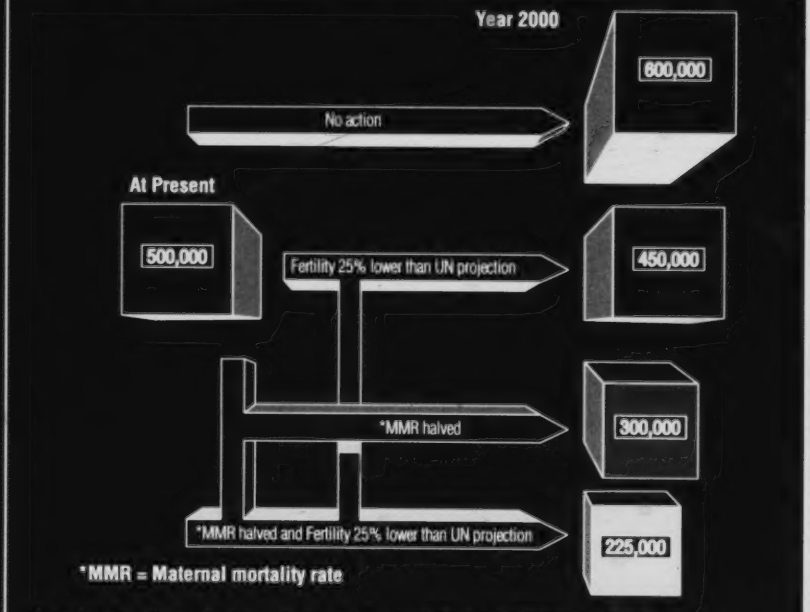
Development investments on behalf of women, including health, education, family planning, and social and economic status are mutually reinforcing if pursued simultaneously; embarked upon separately, they yield only meagre results.

Family planning, for instance, cannot succeed in isolation from advances in education, health and nutrition. The enhancement of women's lives cannot be fully realized without some form of family planning. Channelling education, health services, family planning, credit and other development resources directly to women as part of a people-centered development policy helps to make the most effective use of limited resources.

Comprehensive development investment in women means more rewarding lives not only for women but for their families, their communities and their countries.

Raising the status of women by improving their education, health, and living and working conditions is essential for slower population growth.

Reducing Maternal Mortality



A combination of better health care and family planning for women is the most effective way to reduce maternal mortality.

Source: WHO Safe Motherhood Initiative

The Environment: Balancing People and Resources

Degradation of air, land and water resources — from ever-increasing numbers of people, ever-increasing demands for resources and ever-increasing pollution — is damaging complex ecosystems and reducing the quality of human life.

Population size and rates of growth are key elements in environmental change. At any level of development, increased populations increase energy use, resource consumption and environmental stress.

Only action to achieve a sustainable balance between human populations and their use of resources holds out the hope of reversing the trend.

The biggest single change may be the so-called "greenhouse effect" — a rise in the Earth's temperature caused by growing concentrations of gases in the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide — which may bring about the most rapid climatic change in the history of civilization. There may be a rise in sea level, increases in floods and droughts, shifting of food production zones and ecological disruption as climate changes faster than species can adapt.

Energy consumption per capita in the industrialized world is ten times that of low and middle-income nations. A recent study found that the United States, the European Community and the former Soviet Union, in that order, are the largest net contributors of "greenhouse gases" to the atmosphere; but the developing countries already account for 45 per cent of the emission of those gases.

Development itself is responsible for much of the environmental damage in developing countries. The fleet of motor traffic worldwide will increase by more than 2.5 per cent a year, a more rapid growth than the 1.7 per cent yearly increase of the human population. In 2025, if past trends of population increase and energy use continue, developing countries could double their emission of carbon dioxide and will account for more than half the global increase.

In the developing countries, poverty and rapid population growth increase pressure on available resources. To find food, fuel and shelter, communities are forced into unsustainable practices: burning and cutting down forests, over-using or misusing farmland, and polluting and exhausting water supplies.

The food needs of rapidly growing populations also threaten the air, the water and the soil on which survival depends. Clearing forest to increase farmland increases the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. Destruction of tropical forests eliminates thousands of animal and plant species found only in these woodlands, an irreplaceable reservoir of resources of incalculable present and future value. Each year between 16 to 20 million hectares of tropical forests and woodlands are lost, the higher figure over twice the size of Austria.

The increasing acreage of irrigated paddy-fields and the global herd of 1.3 billion cattle contribute to the 1 per cent annual increase in world methane concentration, a potent contributor to the "greenhouse effect."

Poor use of land — non-stop cultivation of worn-out land, over-grazing, excessive cutting of fuelwood, farming on steep soils — and poor water management mean that in the past 45 years 1.2 billion hectares, an area the size of China and India combined, has suffered moderate to extreme soil degradation — this represents 11 per cent of the Earth's vegetated surface. If present trends continue, the livelihoods of an estimated 1.2 billion people worldwide will be affected by decertification by the year 2000. Many will become "environmental refugees," or people unable to make a living from the land, further swelling congestion in the cities.

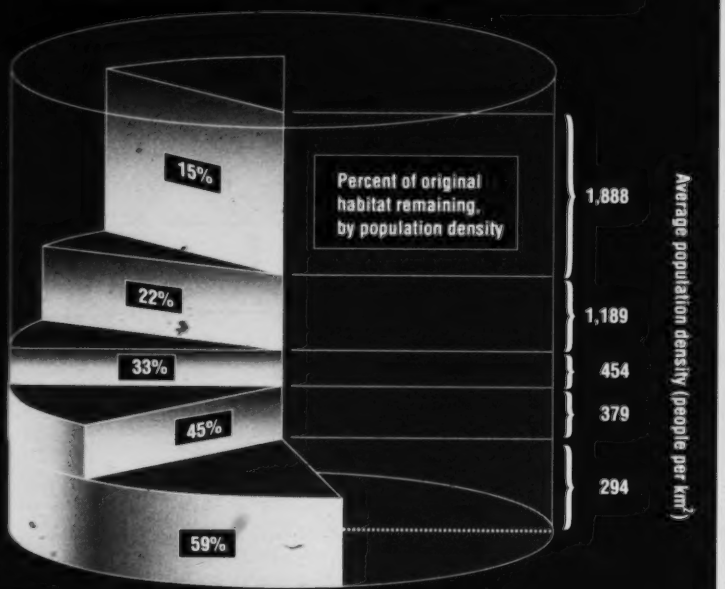
Two billion people in 80 countries live in areas of chronic water shortage. Nearly 1.5 billion people in developing countries are without safe drinking water.

Per capita food output is declining in 46 out of 95 developing countries. By the end of the century, at least 37 countries, most of them in Africa, will be unable to feed themselves from their own resources.

Population policies are central to the success of attempts to avert the environmental crisis, not only to slow rapid rates of growth but to balance distribution between rural and urban areas, and to contribute to policies of balanced resource use. In this effort, women must play a major part since they are largely the custodians of field, farm and forest in the rural developing world. Family planning is an essential aspect of programmes of sustainable development.

At any level of development, increased populations increase energy use, resource consumption and environmental stress.

Population and Loss of Wildlife Habitat



The diagram, based on figures from 50 countries, shows how countries with lower population density have lost a much lower proportion of their original wildlife habitat. The countries were grouped in quintiles, ranked by percentage habitat loss.

Source: Paul Harrison, The Third Revolution, *IB Tauris, 1992*

Millions on the Move: Migration and Urbanization

One and a half billion people in the developing world are crowded into cities such as Calcutta, Mexico City and Sao Paulo; urban population in the developing world has increased more than fivefold since 1950. Of the world's 20 largest cities in the year 2000, 17 will be in developing countries. Up to half the population in many large cities live in slums or squatter settlements often without running water, toilets or electricity.

By the end of the century, over half the world's population will live in cities, putting even greater strains on essential services and scarce resources. The developing world will be largely an urban world: city dwellers in Latin America will make up over 76 per cent of the population; in Africa and Asia the proportions will be over 40 per cent.

The urban explosion in developing countries has been fuelled by migration from impoverished rural areas — people seeking jobs, shelter, health services and schools. An increasing share of the growth comes from natural increase within cities.

Urban populations in developing countries are growing at the rate of 4.5 per cent a year — five and a half times faster than population in rural areas and five and a half times faster than in industrialized countries. Some cities, such as Dhaka and Dar es Salaam, are growing so rapidly they will almost double their populations in 10 years.

Ninety-four developing countries have made reversing or at least slowing the tide of rural to urban migration one of the top priorities of their population policy. These countries have tried — mostly in vain — to relieve the pressure by creating alternative urban centres or by trying to resettle city dwellers. But high costs and the advantages of urban life have plagued these efforts.

In Manila during the 1970s, more than half of the city's growth was the result of migration from rural areas. In Africa, during the first half of the last decade, drought and deteriorating living conditions forced at least 10 million people off the land.

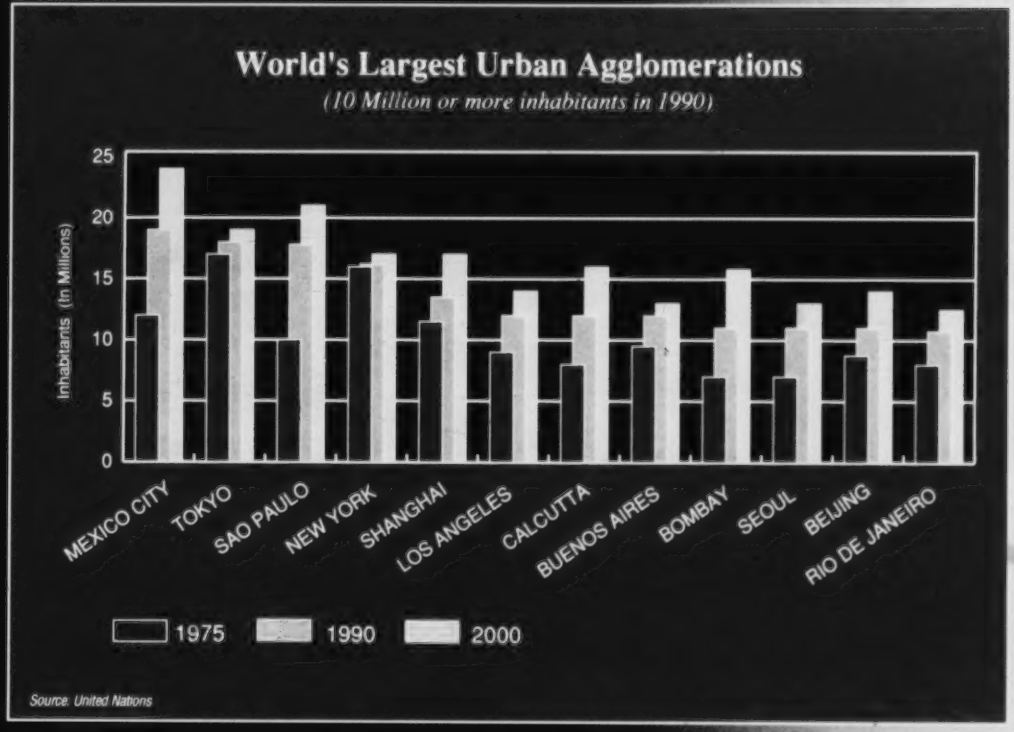
As the cities strain to absorb newcomers, their boundaries creep outward, eating up farmland and forest. At the same time, this encroachment brings about increased demands for energy, food and water.

Demands for housing, roads, lighting, drainage, health and education grow with growing populations. A growing number of cities can no longer cope. In Bombay, with a population growing from 11 million today to over 15 million by the year 2000, an estimated 3.9 million people live in squatter settlements. In Rio de Janeiro, which will grow from over 10 million to 12.5 million by the year 2000, over 3 million live on dangerous, eroded hillsides. In Cairo, which will grow from 9 million to 12 million, thousands live in the cemeteries known as the City of the Dead.

Health conditions in the cities of the developing world vary widely, with squatters and slum dwellers facing worse health conditions than most rural inhabitants. Overcrowding and air pollution increase the danger from tuberculosis and other respiratory ailments. Poor city dwellers drink, bathe and wash in water often contaminated with raw sewage and industrial waste.

Many solutions for the urban crisis have been proposed. Strategies include developing smaller, more habitable urban centres; giving squatters legal tenure and loans to improve housing; and enlisting the support of local leaders in securing services and creating employment in the community. In some cities, such as Lima and Bangkok, squatters and slum dwellers have already banded together in community organizations to provide essential services, including water lines, electricity and health clinics. Mexico City, where the air was officially declared unfit to breathe, has closed down the city's biggest oil refinery to help reduce pollution.

Urban strategies can point the way to a better life for city dwellers. But improving urban conditions may simply attract more migrants from the



rural areas. Urban strategies must accompany policies to improve rural conditions, including health, education, employment and environmental protection, to give people options other than migration.

Migrant Workers

The late 1980s witnessed the resurgence of international migration as an important demographic phenomenon. As many as 70 million people, mostly from developing countries, are working (legally or illegally) in other countries, over one million people emigrate permanently to other countries and close to that number seek asylum each year.

Unbalanced development increases pressure to migrate. As people act to improve their lives, they will move to:

- Marginal lands that are ecologically sensitive.
- Towns and cities that can no longer provide the basic necessities.
- Other countries where tensions will develop.

One way to reduce migration pressures is to slow population growth. With this, progress towards a sustainable development is possible.

By the end of the century, over half the world's population will live in cities.

Information, Education and Communication: Creating Awareness

Information, education and communication programmes provide the knowledge and motivation to make critical choices affecting population growth and economic and social development.

The information component helps promote understanding and awareness of population issues and how they are addressed by governments and individuals. Information may include the effect of changes in population growth and distribution on national and personal life; the demographic and health benefits of family planning; and the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS.

The mass media — newspapers, film, television and radio — are prime carriers of population information, but in developing countries they are frequently supplemented by traditional media and local specialties — puppet shows, theatre performances, and music or dance presentations. These familiar media have presented news and views on current events for generations, and are known and trusted by their audiences. Presentations are frequently the start of debate and discussion on issues of the day.

For narrower, more specialized audiences, the mass media are supplemented by specialized journals and other networks. Exchange of information among the growing number of national and international population organizations, for example, has greatly increased in recent years with the advent of inexpensive and accessible desk-top publishing. One of the most significant recent developments is the spread of regional, sub-regional and international information networks. These include the Association for Population/Family Planning Libraries and Informational Centres, the United Nations Population Information Network, regional networks such as POPIN-Africa and Asia/Pacific POPIN, and POPLINE, the population database distributed by the Johns Hopkins University's Population Information Program. Population communication is designed to create more awareness, acceptance and use of family planning services. Both the medium and the message should be adapted to social and cultural realities.

The choice of medium is important. With an estimated 1.9 billion radios in the world, roughly one for every three people, and growing numbers of TVs and VCRs, electronic media can be very successful. Radio and television soap operas featuring family planning, popular songs on population themes and phone-in question and answer sessions have all made an impact in different countries. Such means can be very important in areas of low literacy or where newspapers do not circulate widely. A Mexican TV soap opera series is credited with bringing thousands to family planning clinics; in Nigeria, family planning themes were integrated into a TV drama series; in Egypt, TV mini-dramas provided family planning information; in Turkey, a special family planning series on TV was watched by 55 per cent of all adult viewers.

Targeting audiences is also crucial. Programmes designed for teenagers, for example, can help to address serious problems associated with early pregnancies. In many countries it is particularly important to change the attitudes of men towards the responsibilities of parenthood.

Population education in schools began to win acceptance in developing countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Today it is available in over 80 countries in the developing world. Population education is incorporated into the curriculum of subjects such as geography, social studies and biology. Its aims vary from country to country, but are generally designed to introduce understanding and a sense of responsibility regarding population issues.

Increasingly population is included at the primary school level in the developing world since enrolment there is twice that of secondary schools. Most programmes, however, are currently directed at secondary schools.

Population education does not end with schooling. It continues in literacy and vocational classes, in worker educational projects and in extension programmes in health, nutrition and agriculture.

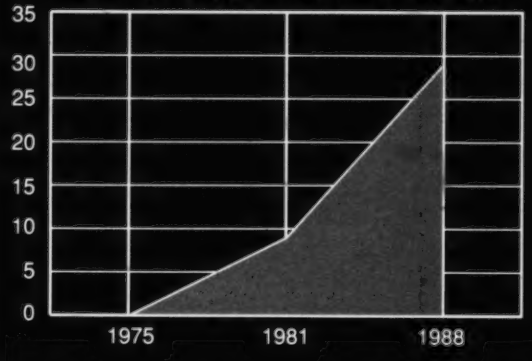
Both the medium and the message should be adapted to social and cultural realities.

Population Education School Projects

1970-1988

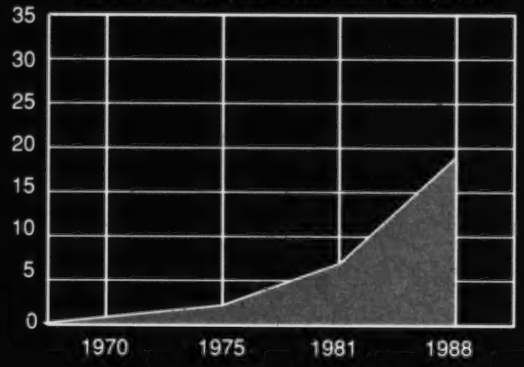
AFRICA

Number of active population education school projects



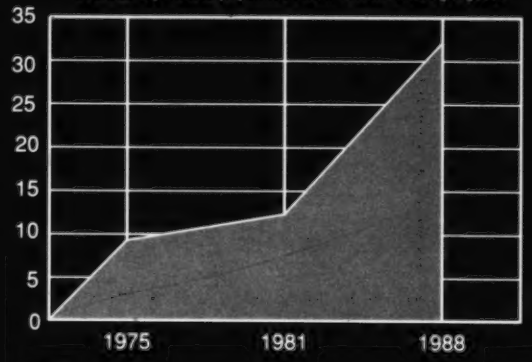
ARAB STATES

Number of active population education school projects



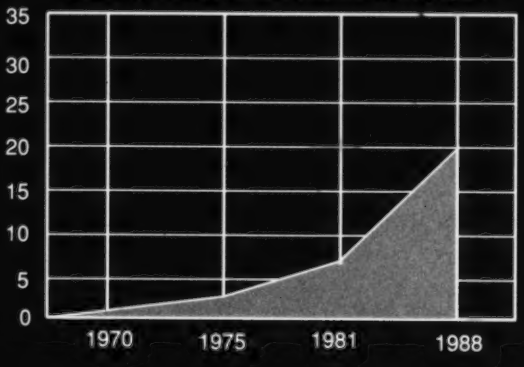
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Number of active population education school projects



LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Number of active population education school projects



Source: UNFPA

Population Data: Overcoming the Numbers Barrier

A data barrier hampers the efforts of population and development planners in many countries.

Most countries in the developing world still lack reliable statistics on births and deaths. Many developing countries have insufficient data to support integration of population policy and development planning. In many parts of the world, there is a shortage of information on the effects of population on the environment and resources.

There is a scarcity of vital data on women in developing countries and their economic contributions to society; without such essential information, endeavours to improve their status are impeded. Some countries do not even tabulate statistics by gender.

In the 1970s the United Nations-sponsored Africa Census Programme funded censuses in 21 newly-independent countries which had never had a census. In some nations today, census tabulations are produced years after the count has been taken; findings may not be fully analyzed or widely disseminated.

Unreliable or obsolete data or information which are not presented in a usable form prevent development planners from fully assessing the interaction between population and development.

Training is needed for the correct use of demographic data. Too often the data are merely appended to economic analyses or development proposals, rather than integrated into findings and recommendations, sharply reducing their value, and in the case of development projects, their chances of success.

Inadequate population information and statistics can also affect solutions to environmental problems. Data and analysis of the economic and social impact of ecological change are needed to convince policy makers of the need for action. In many countries little information is available on the extent of environment and population problems.

Developing countries need more of today's sophisticated equipment, more computer-trained staff for data processing, and some means of overcoming problems of power interruptions and equipment maintenance.

"Vital statistics" on births, deaths and marriages, school enrolments and drop-outs, employment and residence, readily available in developed countries, are in short supply in many developing countries because civil registration systems do not exist or are incomplete. Improved coverage of birth and death registration statistics could be achieved by linking registration with primary health care reporting systems.

The gathering of data is often conducted on an ad hoc basis. Whether they are censuses, vital registration systems or sample surveys, data collection needs to be incorporated into permanent statistical systems.

The World Fertility Survey, which is one of the bases for preparing population projections, evaluating family planning programmes and assessing overall demographic and social change, had by 1984 enlisted the participation of only 40 developing and 21 developed countries. The Demographic Health Survey project, begun in 1984, has further expanded the scope of fertility rate and contraceptive prevalence rate coverage in the developing world, notably in Africa and Latin America. So far, surveys in 29 countries have been completed.

In many developing countries, lack of reliable demographic information and analysis has prevented adequate policy responses to development needs. This is particularly true of such population groups as women, the urban poor, youth, the elderly, nomadic populations and minorities. It is also hard to find accurate information on rural and sparsely-populated areas, or information on specific regions or localities. Too heavy a reliance on national data masks local issues and the need for policies directed to them. The Amsterdam Forum

declared in November 1989 that among the "critical basic activities" needed to attain population goals is "an increase in efforts to collect, analyze, disseminate and use data in population policy and programme planning."

During the period 1969-1991, UNFPA assistance in basic data collection totalled $266.7 million. UNFPA assistance helps to make essential population data available for use in effective promotion of awareness and formulation of population policies and programmes. More importantly, it also serves to strengthen national capacity and self-reliance in most developing countries.

Most countries in the developing world still lack reliable statistics on births and deaths.

Women count — but are not counted

Much of the work that women do is "invisible" in national accounting and censuses, despite its obvious productive and social worth. The reason is that women are heavily involved in small-scale agriculture, the informal sector and household activities — area where data are notoriously deficient.

But there is another aspect. Women's work, especially their household work, often is unpaid and therefore unaccounted for — processing food, carrying water, collecting fuel, growing subsistence crops and providing child care. For example, women in Nepalese villages contribute 22 per cent to household money incomes, but when nonmarketed subsistence production is included, their contribution rises to 53 per cent. It is estimated that unpaid household work by women, if properly evaluated, would add a third to global production.

Even when women are remunerated for their work, their contribution is often undervalued. In formal employment, women earn significantly less than men in every country having data. In the informal sector, where most women work, their earnings at times reach only a third (Malaysia) to a half (Latin America) of those of men.

Do women remain invisible in statistics because little value is attached to what they do? Apparently, yes.

Women have shouldered a large part of the adjustment burden of developing countries in the 1980s. To make up for lost family income, they have increased production for home consumption, worked longer hours, slept less and often eaten less — substantial costs of structural adjustment that have gone largely unrecorded.

The low value attached to women's work requires a fundamental remedy: if women's work were more fully accounted for, it would become clear how much women count in development. To do that requires much better gender-specific data on development. There is a need to redesign national censuses, particularly agricultural surveys.

Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1990

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